

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 NSC-05 INR-05 CIAE-00  
ACDA-10 PM-03 DODE-00 L-01 TRSE-00 NEA-07 AF-04  
MCE-00 /060 W  
-----035384 262133Z /73

R 261515Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5221  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 01495

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PARM, MPOL, UR, GW, GE, SO, ET  
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR FALIN:  
BREZHNEV'S HEALTH AND TRIP TO FRG; BERLIN;  
NEUTRON BOMB; AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY. AT LUNCH JANUARY 25 WITH  
SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO FRG FALIN HE HAD NOTHING NEW TO SAY  
ABOUT BREZHNEV'S HEALTH, ALTHOUGH HE HINTED SEVERAL TIMES  
THAT BREZHNEV MIGHT LEAVE THE SCENE SOON AND THAT THIS  
WAS ANOTHER IMPORTANT REASON TO MAKE RAPID PROGRESS ON  
SALT. ON RESCHEDULING BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRG, FALIN SAID  
"ALMOST EVERYTHING" DEPENDS ON BREZHNEV'S HEALTH.  
FALIN REJECTED THE THOUGHT THAT BREZHNEV'S LETTERS ABOUT  
THE NEUTRON BOMB COULD BE SEEN AS INTERFERENCE IN  
ALLIANCE AFFAIRS; HE INTERJECTED A SLIGHTLY THREATENING  
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NOTE IN SAYING THAT, IF U.S. DECIDES TO PRODUCE AND  
DEPLOY NEUTRON WEAPON, THEN SOVIETS OF COURSE WOULD DO  
LIKEWISE -- THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WOULD BE THAT, WHEREAS  
THE U.S. WEAPON IS TACTICAL, THE SOVIET NEUTRON WEAPON  
"MIGHT BE STRATEGIC." FALIN STRONGLY CRITICIZED  
MEETINGS IN BERLIN OF FRG POLITICAL PARTIES' FRAKTIONS  
AND SAID PERMISSION TO VISIT EAST BERLIN WILL BE RE-

FUSED IN FUTURE TO PARTICIPANTS IN SUCH MEETINGS AS THEY HAVE IN RECENT PAST; HE ALSO HIT VISITS TO BERLIN OF STATE VISITORS TO FRG AND PARTICIPATION BY WEST BERLIN IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. FALIN COMMENTED ON SITUATION IN HORN OF AFRICA AND IN MIDDLE EAST; ON LATTER, HE EXPRESSED PESSIMISM AND SEEMED ESPECIALLY DOWN ON ARABS, WHOM HE CRITICIZED AS AN "UNRULY LOT." END SUMMARY.

1. I LUNCHEDED JANUARY 25 AT MY INVITATION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR FALIN. ON BREZHNEV'S HEALTH, FALIN SAID THAT BREZHNEV HAD SUFFERED A RELAPSE FROM THE FLU AND "OF COURSE" IT IS HOPED THAT HE WILL RECOVER QUICKLY. FALIN NOTED THAT BREZHNEV HAS BEEN SICK EVERY WINTER SINCE THE MID-70'S WITH FLU AND THAT EACH YEAR THE RECOVERY PERIOD IS LONGER. HE ADDED THAT ONE CAN ONLY BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECT THAT BREZHNEV'S HEALTH SITUATION COULD HAVE ON SUCH IMPORTANT MATTERS AS THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS. FALIN ASSERTED THAT BREZHNEV HAS ALWAYS FAVORED THE SALT PROCESS AND TOOK A CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION REGARDING THEM; HIS HEALTH PROBLEMS CONSTITUTED ANOTHER REASON FOR MAKING RAPID PROGRESS IN THE TALKS. AT ANOTHER POINT IN OUR DISCUSSION, FALIN AGAIN REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR RAPID PROGRESS IN SALT AND SAID THAT "OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE FACTORS" COULD ARISE AT ANY TIME WHICH COULD INTERFERE WITH THE PROCESS OF DETENTE  
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AND CAUSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. IN THE CONTEXT, I TOOK THIS TO BE, INTER ALIA, A REFERENCE TO BREZHNEV'S HEALTH.

2. FALIN HOPED THAT BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO THE FRG COULD BE RESCHEDULED. HE AT FIRST SAID THAT, IN THIS CONNECTION, EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON THE STATE OF BREZHNEV'S HEALTH, BUT HE CORRECTED HIMSELF TO SAY THAT "ALMOST EVERYTHING" DEPENDED ON THE HEALTH SITUATION. FALIN ALSO REMARKED THAT A QUESTION STILL REMAINS AS TO WHAT RESULTS WOULD COME FROM A VISIT, NOTING THAT THE PRESENT PROSPECTS FOR CONCRETE PROGRESS ARE NOT PROMISING. IN ANOTHER COMMENT, FALIN SAID THAT HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH A BREZHNEV TRIP TO THE U.S. THAN WITH THE TRIP TO THE FRG.

3. WE HAD A RATHER SHARP EXCHANGE ON THE SUBJECT OF BREZHNEV'S LETTERS TO WESTERN COUNTRIES CONCERNING THE NEUTRON WEAPON, WITH FALIN OBJECTING STRONGLY TO MY OBSERVATION THAT THIS ACTION COULD BE SEEN -- AND IS BEING INTERPRETED BY PUBLIC OPINION -- AS INTERFERENCE

IN ALLIANCE AFFAIRS. I STRESSED THE DEFENSIVE NATURE  
OF THE NEUTRON WEAPON AND ITS UTILITY IN THE LIGHT OF

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BONN 01495

LIMDIS

SOVIET PREPONDERANCE IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS IN THE  
EUROPEAN THEATRE. FALIN DISCOUNTED FEARS OF SOVIET PRE-  
PONDERANCE, SAYING THESE WERE EXAGGERATED FOR POLITICAL  
PURPOSES BY THE FRG AND OTHER NATO COUNTRIES. SO FAR  
AS THE NEUTRON WEAPON IS CONCERNED, HE ASSERTED THAT,  
IF THE U.S. ADOPTED IT, THEN THE SOVIETS WOULD ALSO.  
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE MIGHT BE THAT, IF THE U.S. WEAPONS  
ARE TACTICAL IN NATURE, THOSE DEVELOPED BY THE SOVIETS  
MIGHT BE STRATEGIC.

4. FALIN WAS UNUSUALLY SHARP AND CRITICAL IN HIS RE-  
MARKS CONCERNING OPPOSITION LEADER KOHL AND OTHER  
SPOKESMEN OF THE CDU. HE NOTED IN PARTICULAR THEIR  
VIOLENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. WHILE THESE  
MIGHT BE SEEN AS "SIMPLE POLITICS," THEY WERE NOT  
HELPFUL AND THE WORDS WHICH HAVE BEEN USED WOULD CON-  
STITUTE A HEAVY BURDEN ON FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE  
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EVENT THAT THE CDU WERE TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT.

5. SPEAKING OF THE GDR OPPOSITION MANIFESTO, FALIN THOUGHT THIS WAS PRIMARILY SOMETHING PROMOTED BY DER SPIEGEL TO ENHANCE CIRCULATION. IN GENERAL, HE PLAYED DOWN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCUMENT, SAYING THAT UNDOUBTEDLY THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE GDR WHO DISAGREE WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT -- "AS THERE ARE IN ANY COUNTRY" -- BUT THERE IS NO ORGANIZED OPPOSITION GROUP. HE ALSO DISCOUNTED THE IDEA THAT THE MANIFESTO WAS A PLOY TO UNDERMINE HONECKER. FALIN SAID THAT, WHILE HONECKER MAY HAVE HIS ENEMIES, HE COULD HANDLE THEM WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

6. FALIN SPOKE OUT AGAINST PROVOCATIONAL ACTS IN WEST BERLIN, SUCH AS THE GREAT NUMBER OF POLITICAL PARTY FRAKTION MEETINGS WHICH ARE BEING HELD THERE IN FAR GREATER NUMBERS THEN EVER BEFORE. HE SAID THAT KOHL HAD BEEN DENIED ENTRY INTO EAST BERLIN BECAUSE OF THE CDU MEETING IN WEST BERLIN AND NOT BECAUSE OF THE GDR MANIFESTO. FALIN SAID THE SOVIET UNION OPPOSES THESE MEETINGS, WHICH HE SAID ARE AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUR POWER AGREEMENT, ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE AGREEMENT PROVIDED FOR FRAKTION MEETINGS. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT THEIR NUMBER AND SCOPE WENT FAR BEYOND WHAT HAD BEEN ENVISAGED IN THE AGREEMENT. HE RECALLED THAT REPRESENTATIVES FROM LOWER SAXONY HAD BEEN DENIED ENTRY INTO EAST BERLIN, THAT KOHL HAD BEEN TURNED BACK, AND HE SAID OTHERS WOULD ALSO BE TURNED BACK IN THE FUTURE IF THESE ACTIVITIES PERSIST.

7. FALIN ALSO COMPLAINED ABOUT INCREASING ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN BERLIN. I STATED THAT

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IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT BERLIN COULD CEASE BEING PART OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, IN WHICH IT HAD PARTICIPATED FROM THE BEGINNING, AND I ALSO DREW ATTENTION TO THE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SELECTING BERLIN REPRESENTATIVES TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. FALIN REACTED SHARPLY TO THE MENTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. HE POINTED TO THE INCREASED POLITICAL ROLE PLANNED FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN THE FUTURE, INCLUDING ACTIVITY IN THE LEGISLATIVE FIELD, AND SAID THAT, IF BERLIN PARTICIPATES IN THESE ACTIVITIES, THIS

WILL CONSTITUTE A CHANGE IN THE ESSENCE OF THE SITUATION WHICH HAD EXISTED PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF THE QUADRI-PARTITE AGREEMENT. HE SAID THAT THE SOVIETS TAKE THIS

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MATTER SERIOUSLY AND THAT THEIR OPPOSITION WILL CONTINUE TO BE MANIFESTED. HE ADDED THAT A TIME COMES WHEN A LIMIT HAS BEEN REACHED AND A STAND MUST BE TAKEN. HE SEEMED TO SUGGEST THAT THIS POINT MIGHT BE APPROACHING FOR THE SOVIETS IN BERLIN.

8. OTHER POINTS ON BERLIN WHICH FALIN CRITICIZED IN FAIRLY STANDARD TERMS RELATED TO THE NUMBER OF VISITS TO BERLIN MADE BY STATE VISITORS TO THE FRG, SOMETHING HE CLAIMED DID NOT OCCUR BEFORE GENSCHER HAD BECOME FOREIGN MINISTER. HE ALSO THOUGHT THERE WAS ENTIRELY TOO MUCH TALK BY FRG POLITICAL FIGURES ABOUT BERLIN AS A LAND OF THE FRG. AS TO GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE, HE HAD HEARD SOME GOOD THINGS ABOUT HIM AND HOPED THAT EVENTS WOULD PROVE THESE TRUE.

9. FALIN WAS EXTREMELY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE MIDDLE

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EAST. HE SAID HE FEARED NOT ONLY A RENEWED WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT, BUT ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF MILITARY CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ARABS THEMSELVES WHICH COULD CREATE LONG-LASTING ENMITIES AND COMPLICATE THE SITUATION EVEN FURTHER. IN GENERAL, FALIN TOOK A DISPARAGING ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ARABS, CALLING THEM AN "UNRULY LOT."

10. CONCERNING THE HORN OF AFRICA, FALIN SAID THAT THE SOVIETS WERE COUNSELING BOTH ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. HE FELT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR SOMALIA TO WITHDRAW ITS FORCES AND THOUGHT THAT THE SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE WOULD LIE IN AUTONOMY FOR THE OGADEN. WHEN I SAID WE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT MASSIVE SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ETHIOPIA, FALIN ASSERTED THAT UNDUE IMPORTANCE SHOULD NOT BE ATTACHED TO THEM SINCE IT COULD NOT BE EXPECTED THAT THE ETHIOPIANS COULD USE MUCH OF THE NEW EQUIPMENT EFFECTIVELY. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS AWARE OF KENYA'S UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT ITS SECURITY SITUATION AND FAVORS REASSURANCES TO KENYA ON THIS SCORE.  
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## Message Attributes

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